

the way, I forgot to add that we focused on our younger generation as well. And two issues they cared about most were climate and student debt. We delivered on both. President Biden took great leadership on so many of these issues and delivered on so many. So I want to thank him for his leadership. He helped set this bold agenda that we in the Senate were proud to hone and enact.

I want to welcome our two new colleagues to the Senate on our side of the aisle: PETER WELCH of Vermont and John Fetterman of Pennsylvania. I have had a chance to talk to them over the phone before and after their victories, and they will be excellent Senators.

And I want to thank all of those who knocked on doors, who volunteered, who said: This democracy should not be left to others; I must be involved. Thank you. All of that hard work has produced a very good result, at least in my opinion, last Tuesday.

So the election of 2022 is approaching the end, but our obligation to serve the American people continues. Let us move forward with the same spirit of cooperation and compromise that made the 117th Congress one of the most successful in recent history. If we do it, it will be good for Democratic Senators, it will be good for Republican Senators, but, most of all, it will be good for this grand experiment in democracy: the United States of America and its people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, last week's midterm elections reaffirmed something that has been clear for a number of years: When it comes to politics and to policy, we are a closely divided nation.

For the third straight election, our closely divided nation saw a closely fought election go all the way down to the wire. And as the dust settles, for the third straight time, the American people have chosen a very closely divided government.

Though several races for the House of Representatives remain uncalled, it appears the likeliest outcome would mean the American people have put a stop to 2 years of Democrats' disastrous one-party government and placed the House in Republican hands.

Senate Republicans have spent 2 years working to check and balance reckless policies; it will be an outstanding thing for the country to have a set of new reinforcements arriving on the other side of the Capitol.

Now, while this election underscored some of our country's close divisions, it also highlighted areas where the people are speaking overwhelmingly with one voice. The American people are not divided over what Democrats' reckless policy decisions have done to our economy and to their families' budgets. Exit polls show three-quarters of voters say the economy they are facing is "poor" or "not good."

Americans are not divided over whether the current trends in inflation, crime, open borders, and drug addiction are acceptable outcomes for the greatest country in the history of the world; everyone knows they are not.

And Americans are not especially closely divided about whether they want President Biden to keep governing like he has been or actually change course. At this point in their presidencies, every one of the last 13 Presidents dating back to Truman had higher approval ratings than the Biden administration.

One State where Democrats' policy failures have hit especially hard is the State of Georgia. Georgia families have seen cumulative inflation of 14.7 percent since January of 2021. Both of their Senators cast the deciding vote to rubberstamp the spending that made that happen. Now households in the Peach State are paying a hidden Democratic inflation tax that adds up to thousands of extra dollars per year.

The nationwide breakdown in law and order has hit Georgia hard as well. The city of Atlanta now has per capita rates of homicide and assault that are even actually worse than Chicago.

And the people of Georgia saw their State attacked, called racist, called Jim Crow 2.0 by the sitting President of the United States, and boycotted by major corporations over a voting law that just facilitated—listen to this—historic ballot access, record turnout, and low wait times for Georgia voters.

So where do Georgia taxpayers and small businesses go to get their money back after the liberal smear campaign that led to the boycotts? But the day after the election, President Biden took to the podium and triumphantly promised that he plans to learn no lessons and change nothing at all. Here was the quote:

I'm not going to change the direction.

Thirteen-plus percent inflation over 2 years, historic levels of dissatisfaction at Americans' kitchen tables, and President Biden says he will keep doing precisely what he has been doing: more inflation, more crime, more chaos, more open borders.

If Washington Democrats do not want to pivot to sanity and common sense, if they will not help us address the ways their policies are hurting families, they will encounter stiff resistance from the sizable Senate Republican Conference that half the country has elected to be their voice, to be their champions, to fight for them.

So to sum it up, we are going to fight hard for the American families this administration is leaving behind.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). The senior Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, before I make any remarks in the Senate, I want to make remarks of a specific and personal nature to the Presiding Officer. The last time we were together was election night. And it was a wonderful night for you, for your family, and for the State of Illinois. Your victory was an amazing achievement, but your whole life has been an amazing achievement. And I particularly will remember when Brian brought the girls up to the stage, and they jumped all over their mom in her wheelchair. It was something that made the news and should have. It was a wonderful moment for you and your family. But it was a wonderful moment in American politics.

Your re-election in the State of Illinois was my No. 1 priority. And I didn't have to work as hard as I thought I would because they love you, and it showed in the vote. So congratulations to the Presiding Officer.

Madam President, in the fall of 1862, President Abraham Lincoln sent his second annual message to Congress. The Civil War was raging, and our Nation was really uncertain as to its future.

In the midst of what Lincoln called this "fiery trial," he called on Congress to do something that was remarkable: to assure the freedom of every American, including the nearly 4 million Black Americans living in bondage. President Lincoln said this was the only way to "save . . . the last best hope of earth," American democracy.

Last Tuesday, 160 years later, Americans across the country stood up, went to the polls, and did their part, in their time, to save the last best hope of earth. They voted to protect our fundamental freedoms and to preserve our democracy.

One of those voters was a young woman in our State named Lauren. She is a student at the University of Illinois in Champaign. The students at the university once again had to wait for hours in line. People were bringing pizzas to sustain them during their trial of waiting to vote. It worked. They voted in big numbers. And Lauren was one of them.

While she was waiting in line, a reporter with the Illinois Student Newsroom asked her, "Why, why did you come out here and vote?"

She said:

I was voting based on women's rights in terms of candidates who were supporting women's choice. . . . It's important—as a student—as a young person to come out and vote for issues that I care about.

Thankfully, Lauren wasn't alone. In this year's election, young voters continued a trend that began in 2018 and 2020: They turned out in record numbers. They realized it is the responsibility of their generation to do a better job than our generation and to keep democracy alive.